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Major Progress Made During 2006 for NASA's Environmental Cleanup at JPL

Webster defines the noun “progress” as “movement toward a goal,” and by that standard, or by any standard, NASA made excellent progress in 2006 toward its goal of cleaning up the soils and groundwater at and near its Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL).

At last year's end, these are the highlights of that record of progress

- Acting quickly following an early-2006 agreement with the City of Pasadena, NASA published a Proposed Plan in April to fund a groundwater treatment facility in Northwest Pasadena that would lead to the reopening of four City-owned production wells. Following the City's permit approval process, construction of such a plant could begin as early as 2007.
- NASA funded a landscape architect to design, as viewed by passers-by, an enhanced appearance of the Windsor Reservoir, the proposed location for the Pasadena treatment facility.
- NASA continues to fund a treatment plant to remove both perchlorate and volatile organic compounds (VOCs) from groundwater near two Lincoln Avenue Water Company production wells in Altadena, permitting purveyors to supply clean drinking water to their customers.
- NASA effectively treated and removed hundreds of pounds of VOCs and perchlorate this past year from groundwater and soil beneath JPL, and soil cleanup at JPL is now complete and awaiting final regulatory approval.
- NASA proposed in 2006 to expand its highly effective on-site groundwater treatment facility to full capacity in early 2007. Once approved by the regulators we will double the water treatment rate at the “source area.” Construction for that expansion is anticipated to begin during the winter of 2007.
- NASA funded an effort by the City of Pasadena to dismantle and remove the “air stripper” – twin silo structures that had been visible in the upper Arroyo Seco for more than 16 years.
- NASA implemented a neighborhood-based strategy of actively listening to the community, hosting two Public Meetings, an informal meeting for local residents near Windsor Reservoir, conducting numerous tours of the on-JPL source area cleanup, staffing a booth at the annual JPL Open House, and working with local media to distribute news of NASA's cleanup efforts among local residents.



Other NASA activities during 2006 included continuation of its multi-faceted outreach effort to involve the public in review and comment on all aspects of the cleanup, a continuation of an extensive groundwater monitoring effort, and an additional investigation – including groundwater modeling, geochemistry, chemical concentration data, and a study of stable isotopes – to help determine the extent of movement of chemicals that originated from historic waste disposal practices at JPL.

In addition, NASA's groundwater cleanup Web site at <http://jplwater.nasa.gov> was updated throughout the year with official and supporting NASA cleanup documents, including a new Community Involvement Plan and two editions of the NASA cleanup newsletter. Summaries of these and other documents are provided on the Web site in Spanish as well as English.

The Web site was also supplemented in December with the addition of a "Media Room" to be composed of the latest cleanup information and background materials for news reporters and others in the media.

2006 Year-End Cleanup Statistics

- NASA's on-site treatment plant, proposed for expansion in early 2007, has already removed 620 pounds of chemicals – 600 pounds of perchlorate and 20 pounds of VOCs – from groundwater beneath JPL, and concentration of chemicals in that groundwater have been much reduced.
- Also on-site, 260 pounds of VOCs have been removed from the soil above the groundwater, and source area soil cleanup is now said to be complete, pending only official confirmation by State and federal regulators. Since treatment began in February 1998, 230 pounds of carbon tetrachloride and 30 pounds of trichloroethylene (TCE) have been removed from JPL soils. Removal of these chemicals from the soil eliminates the possibility of their further affecting the groundwater beneath and beyond JPL.
- Some 230 pounds of perchlorate and 73 pounds of VOCs have been removed from groundwater at the Lincoln Avenue Water Company (LAWC) treatment plant since it began operating in July 2004. Since 1990, more than 1,000 pounds of VOCs have been removed from groundwater at the site.

F o r M o r e I n f o r m a t i o n

More information about the NASA Groundwater Cleanup Project at JPL is available on our **Web site** <http://jplwater.nasa.gov> and at the **NASA Information Repositories** located in the Pasadena Central Library, La Cañada Flintridge Public Library or the Altadena Public Library.

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